

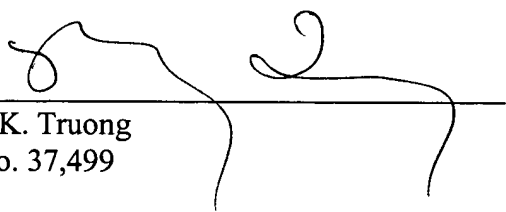
Referred to as the "related applications", contain subject matter that is related to the subject matter of the present application. The related applications may contain one or more claims that are substantially similar to one or more claims in the present application, and those claims may have been rejected in the related applications. Therefore, the Examiner is encouraged to review the file histories of the related applications as some of the information contained therein may be material to the examination of the present application.

Throughout the pendency of this application, please charge any additional fees, including any required extension of time fees, and credit all overpayments to deposit account 50-1302. A duplicate of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

HICKMAN PALERMO TRUONG & BECKER LLP

Dated: September 28, 2004

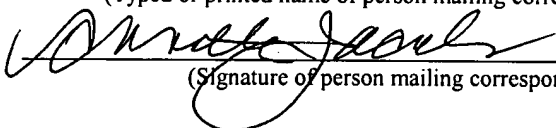

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on September 29, 2004.
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Annette Jacobs

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